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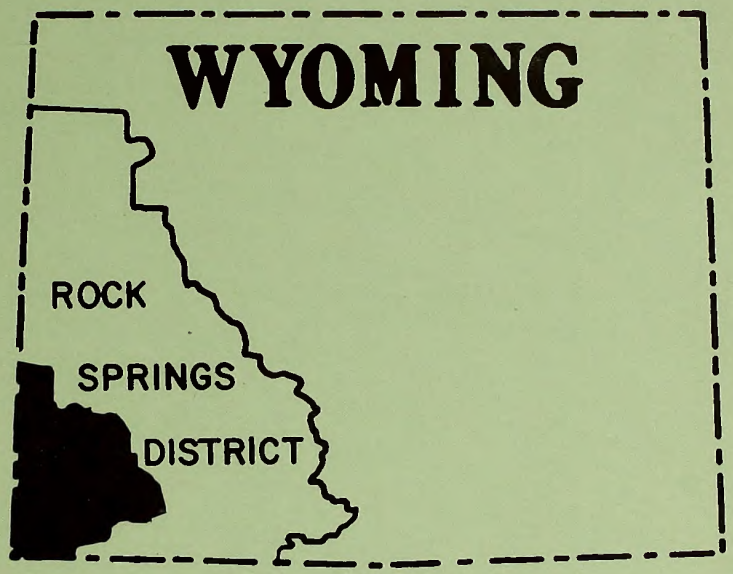
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR • BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Management Framework Plan

PROPOSED DECISIONS



PIONEER TRAILS UNIT

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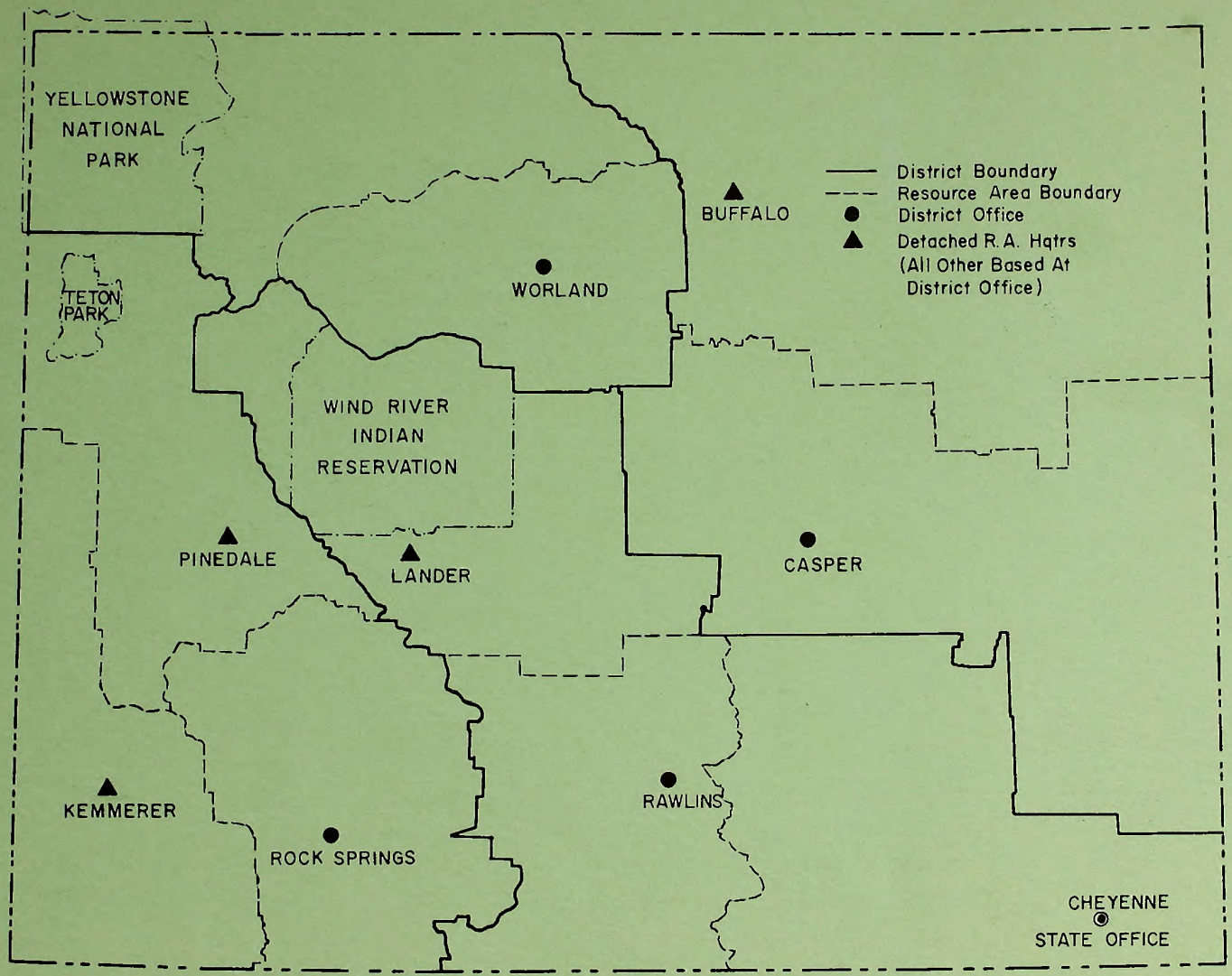

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The purpose of this brochure is to summarize the land use decisions for the Pioneer Trails Management Framework Plan (MFP).

Because of the large number and complexity of the decisions, it is impossible to present all of them in this summary. We have, therefore, summarized only the significant decision in each resource activity.

The Pioneer Trails plan, with all related documents, is available at the area office in Kemmerer. You are invited to visit and review it at your convenience. Ken Harrison, Kemmerer Resource Area manager, as well as my staff and I are available to discuss the decisions and assist you in reviewing the document.

Again, I thank all the persons, organizations, and governmental agencies which contributed so significantly to this project. Your assistance was invaluable in completing resource inventories, developing future land use recommendations, and commenting on these recommendations as well as the decisions for use on the national resource lands.

Neil F. Morck
District Manager
Rock Springs District
April 15, 1977

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OVERVIEW

This brochure represents a revision and consolidation of several previous Management Framework Plans (MFPs) which were prepared prior to 1973. The revision provides current land use guidance for the environmental analysis of coal leasing.

This plan will serve as a guide for the surface management of the National Resource Lands (NRL) as well as the federal mineral estates, some of which lie under privately owned surface lands.

The plan includes a narrative and graphic display of the land use decisions supported by rationale and summary of public input for each program (lands, minerals, range, forestry, watershed, recreation and wildlife).

The management framework plan is a working document which guides day-to-day activity. The planning decisions allocate resources and land uses, thereby defining and resolving use conflicts. Program objectives and land use allocations set forth in the MFP provide a framework for developing program action plans to manage individual resources.

These planning decisions are subject to revision at any time in response to changing conditions or demands. Significant revisions will involve public input and review.

Public participation is an integral part of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) planning process. This process encourages all interested citizens to express their views and desires, raise specific issues, and explore situations in the various planning areas.

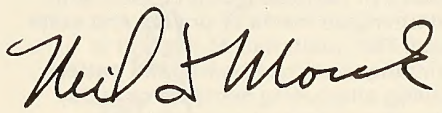
Public involvement for the Pioneer Trails MFP began in the summer of 1976 with individual contacts to gather information and to acquire recommendations concerning future land use. Future planning was discussed with a variety of special interest groups during November, 1976.

A series of articles appeared in the Rock Springs "Rocket-Miner" in late November highlighting the planning effort and proposed decisions. News releases were provided to all regional media and wire services. A brochure was distributed to interest groups and mailed to a variety of interested citizens.

News articles appeared in all of the newspapers in the district as well as on the electronic media newscasts. On November 30, 1976, the proposed land use decisions, with a summary of public comment, were presented to the District Multiple Use Advisory Board for their review. In November and December, 1976, we met with Sweetwater, Lincoln and Uinta County Commissioners, their Planning Commissions and Planners to review the planning procedure.

Open house and workshop sessions were held in Evanston and Kemmerer in December, 1976. These meetings were attended by a wide cross-section of the public and industry. Approximately 50 people commented on the major issues through the workshop and in writing.

The workshop group made recommendations on land disposal, coal leasing, oil and gas development, range management, watershed protection, off-road vehicle use, historic trails, wildlife habitat, wild horse management, and other issues. The workshop was well reported in the news media.



Neil F. Morck
District Manager

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Pioneer Trails Planning Unit is located in southwestern Wyoming, covering the major portion of Uinta and Lincoln Counties, and the extreme western part of Sweetwater County. It is bordered on the south and west by Utah and Idaho, on the north and east by the Bridger-Teton National Forest, Fontenelle Creek and the Green River. The unit is approximately 75 miles wide from east to west and 130 miles long, north to south. In the northern part, the land ownership pattern consists of large blocks of national resource land with intermingled tracts of private and state land. The south half of the unit is primarily a checkerboard land pattern having alternating sections of state, private and federal ownership.

Land ownership is shown in the Lands Section.

The topography consists of rolling hills and buttes in the east to high mountains and escarpments in the west, caused by overthrust faulting. Elevations range from 6,100 feet in the valleys to over 8,500 feet in the mountain foothills. Most of the unit falls within the Green River Basin except for the area along the Utah-Idaho border which drains into the Snake River Basin.

Precipitation ranges from 16 inches in the northwest and southwest to 8 inches in the east. The Bear River Divide and the Tump Range on the west side of the unit receive 12-14 inches of annual precipitation. The Hams Fork and Blacks Fork drainage basins along the eastern half of the unit receive from 8-10 inches annually. Most precipitation occurs in the spring and fall. Heavy snow pack at higher elevations contribute directly to the high precipitation belts.

The unit has cool year-round temperatures, with west to southwest winds during fall, winter and late spring. Mean yearly wind speed is 13 mph. Temperatures are subject to extreme variations, both seasonally and day-to-night. Temperatures in the lower 90's occur occasionally in the summer, but 80 degree temperatures are more prevalent. Freezing temperatures can occur during any month, and winter lows are frequently below zero. An average of 71 frost-free days can be expected, depending upon location and elevation.

Sagebrush with associated grasses and forbs covers approximately 66% of the area. Saltbush-greasewood, winterfat and desert shrub types comprise the next most prevalent vegetative types. Meadows and cropland are found along the fertile, irrigated bottom lands. Juniper, aspen, Douglas-fir, and lodge-pole pine are the main forest types, and are found along ridges, foothills and higher mountain elevations.

Deer, elk, antelope, moose and various small game and non-game animals are present throughout the area.

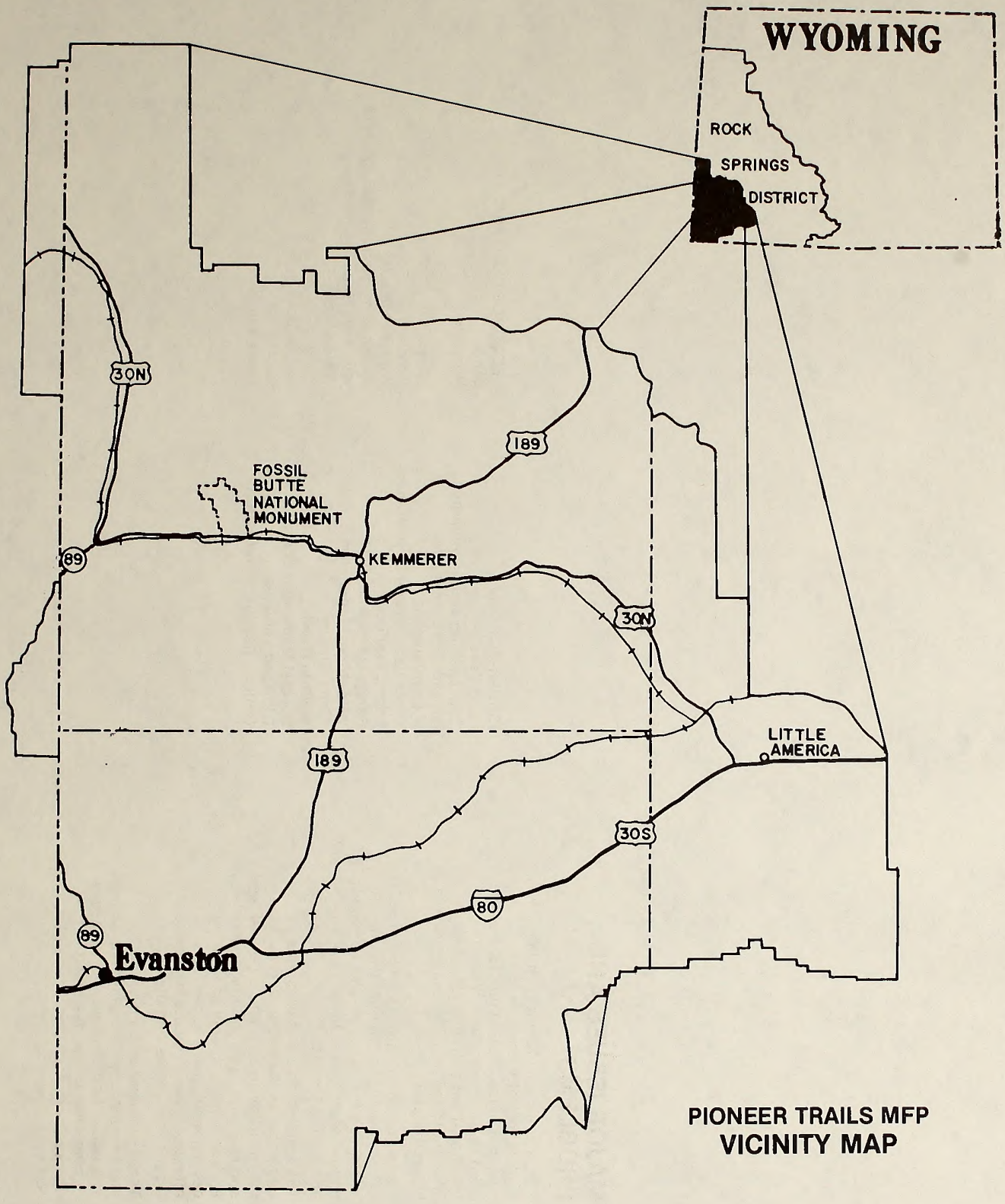
The environment around communities, ranches, mining areas and transportation routes has been moderately to severely impacted by human activities. Much of the planning unit contains trails, roads and utility lines. Open space, wildlife, sparse human population and historical values make up the essential ingredient for the present and past life style of the local residents. The major population centers are Evanston, Kemmerer, Cokeville, Fort Bridger, Lyman and Mountain View.

Mineral exploration, development and production activities use national resource lands and contribute greatly to the local economy. Coal, phosphate, geothermal resources, trona (sodium), oil and natural gas are being extracted or have future development potential.

There are extensive coal reserves near Kemmerer. Phosphate deposits are being mined and processed west of Kemmerer, and other deposits are present throughout Lincoln County. Geothermal resources have been identified north of Cokeville. Along the eastern boundary in Sweetwater County, several large companies are mining and processing trona. Oil and natural gas exploration is increasing north of Evanston, primarily as the result of the recent gas discovery in the overthrust belt.

Livestock, timber, recreation, wildlife habitat and watershed also have a significant influence on the natural resource lands and local economy.

The population density of the area is sparse and far below the national average. The life style has been based on this open space concept of living. Increasing growth will alter this way of life and will produce additional demand on local facilities. National resource lands make up a major part of the lands within the planning unit. Thus, management and development of the various resources will have a significant effect on the local social-economic structure.



PIONEER TRAILS MFP
VICINITY MAP

MAJOR ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

The famous "western way of life", with its customs of friendliness, neighborliness, mutual aid, love of the great outdoors and adherence to traditional conservative values is inherent in the thinking and approach to life in the area.

Rapid population growth and industrial expansion due to the energy/mineral crisis, and the availability of abundant natural resources in the area are influencing the area.

The major issues and problems addressed in the planning process are the result of present and potential land and resource use conflicts, unavoidable environmental impacts of resource development, and socio-economic effects of resource development on local communities and life styles.

The issues and problems were identified through the planning process and public participation. These issues or problems will be described in the management decisions chapter for each resource program.

ISSUE/PROBLEM	RESOURCE PROGRAM
Land Uses	Lands
Coal Leasing and Development	Minerals
Oil and Gas Leasing and Development	Minerals
Trona Leasing and Development	Minerals
Forest Products	Forest Products
Range Management	Range and Livestock Management
Wild Horse Management	Wild Free-Roaming Horses
Water Quality	Watershed
Wildlife Habitat	Wildlife
Special Management Areas	Recreation
Off-Road Vehicles	Recreation
Cultural Resource Protection	Recreation

Management Decisions

LANDS

Resource Description

The lands program functions to support other resource programs of the Bureau and those of state or other federal agencies.

These lands have, for many years, been conveyed to individuals, organizations, local and state governments, or reserved for programs of other federal agencies.

Lands having unusual values may be designated for specific programs such as withdrawal for oil shale, recreation development, preservation of primitive areas or temporary withdrawals pending legislation or classification.

The Bureau provides land for community expansion and other public purposes. Private development is also possible where such ownership will best serve the interest of the public.

Specific actions include: planning, classification, appraisal, sales, record maintenance, administration of leases, rights-of-way, and land use permits.

Land ownership in the Pioneer Trails planning unit is summarized in Table 1. Table 2 shows the acreage withdrawn by agency.

The north half of the unit contains solidly blocked federal lands. Lands along the major drainages in the area, including the Bear River, the Smith's Fork of the Bear River, the Hams Fork of the Green River and Pomeroy Basin are predominately private.

The south half of the unit is dominated by a checkerboard land ownership pattern. Generally, even-numbered sections are federally owned, and odd-numbered sections are privately owned.

Most of the federal lands are administered by the Bureau of Land Management. Fossil Butte National Monument, encompassing 7,480 acres nine miles west of Kemmerer, is administered by the National Park Service.

The Pioneer Trails unit also includes 1,360 acres of the Seedskadee National Wildlife Refuge, located along the Green River below Fontenelle Reservoir.

The fragmented ownership of the checkerboard lands necessitates close coordination of management policies and actions between private land owners and the BLM.

Related Major Issues/Problems

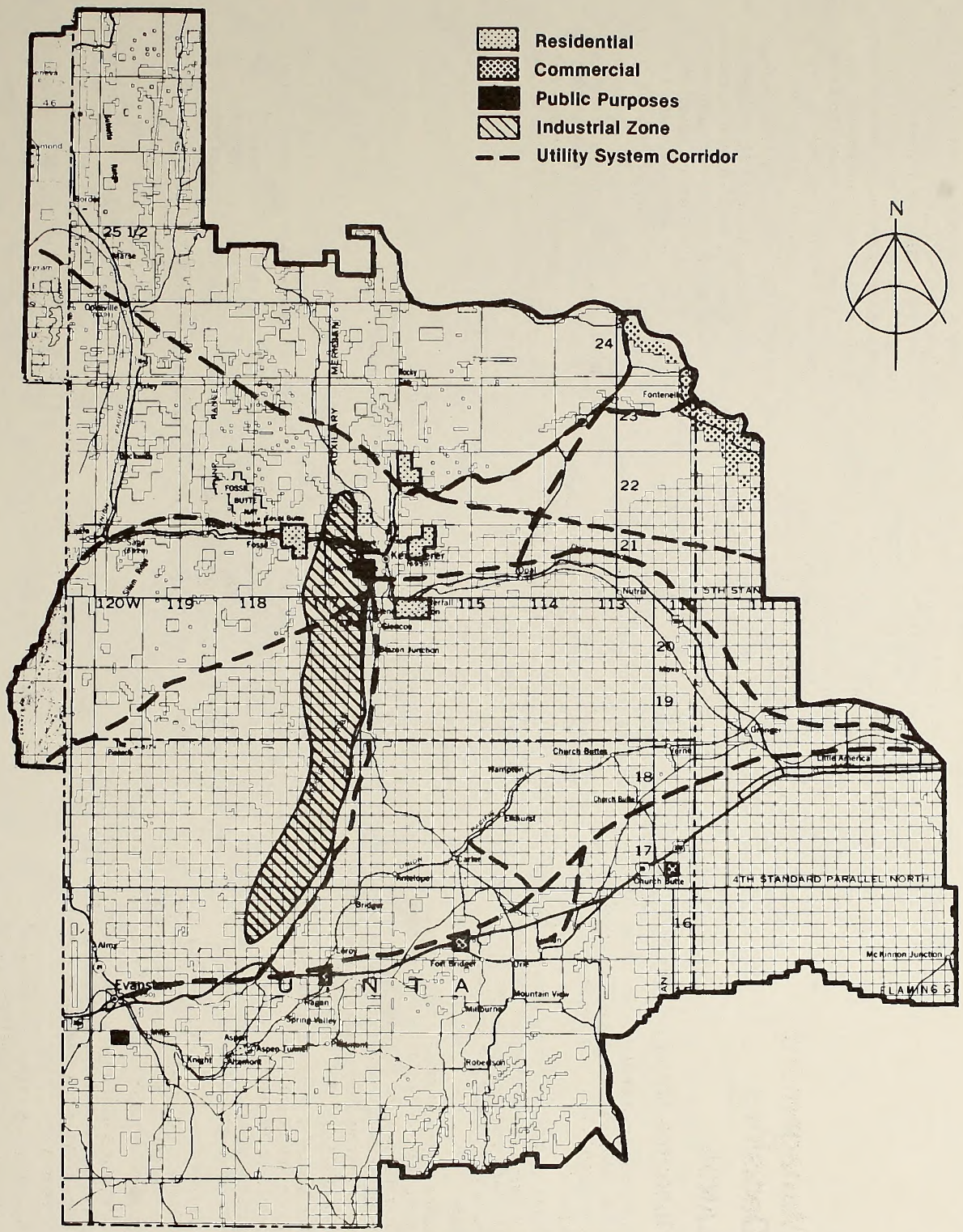
Growing communities need land for residential, commercial, industrial and public purposes. Approximately 7,500 acres of national resource lands are considered for lease or transfer to local government or private ownership as land is needed and determined to be suitable. An additional 6,000 acres are under consideration for transfer to private ownership for agriculture.

To minimize the spread of utility routes into areas now largely free of these intrusions, it is proposed to confine major future installations to specified corridors which presently contain concentrations of these facilities.

Social well being, income, employment, tax base and the general economy of the area would benefit from controlled land disposal while the environment outside the utility corridors would be protected from these intrusions.

Table 1
LAND OWNERSHIP
(as of August 1976)

	County (Acreage)					
Ownership	Lincoln	Bear Lake (ID)	Uinta	Sweetwater	Total Acreage	% of Total
Federal	840,848	11,242	396,622	195,151	1,416,863	47
State	77,666	2,320	51,533	8,312	139,831	5
Private	398,598	44,288	811,960	221,444	1,476,290	48
TOTAL	1,317,112	57,850	1,233,115	424,907	3,032,984	100



PIONEER TRAILS MFP
LANDS

Table 2
LAND WITHDRAWALS
(as of August 1976)

Type of Withdrawal	Administering Agency	Acreage[1] Dup[2]	Non-dup[3]
Oil Shale	GS	13,560	406,905
Coal	GS	640	135,480
Phosphate	GS	18,680	25,940
Reclamation	BR	14,960	30,765
Public Water Reserve	BLM	90	1,640
Fossil Butte National Monument	PS	5,820	1,660
Communication Site	CAA	40	240
Protective (Recreation Site)	BLM	—	80
Seedskadee National Wildlife Refuge	FWS	1,360	—
Stock Driveway	BLM	480	—
Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area	FS	120	—
Power Site (Idaho)	FPC	—	40
TOTAL ACRES			602,750

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Decisions

Multiple Use Objective

Make national resource lands available to meet land needs for urban expansion, industrial development, public purposes and agriculture while considering other resource values and uses.

Multiple Use Decisions

1. **Make available 5,640 acres of national resource lands in the vicinity of Kemmerer/Diamondville for future townsite (residential and commercial) purposes. The transfer to non-federal ownership would be subject to approval by local government and only after development of associated private lands.**

   National resource lands included are in: Sec. 10 & 12, T. 20 N, R. 116 W.; Sec. 4, 8, 9 & 17, T. 21 N., R. 117 W.; Sec. 6, 7, 17, 18, 19 & 20, T. 22 N., R. 115 W.

   Rationale: By 1990, it is estimated that the population will double due primarily to industrial expansion. Suitable land for residential/commercial expansion is scarce. Lands identified are suitable based on topography, accessibility to utility and transportation systems and service industries. Only minor impacts on other resources and a positive social/economic benefit on the area would result.

2. **Transfer 40 acres of national resource lands to non-federal ownership as needed for commercial purposes and as approved by local government. Lands identified for this purpose are near Interstate 80 exchanges in Sec. 8, T. 15 N., R. 117 W.; Sec. 30, T. 16 N., R. 115 W.; and Sec. 30, T. 17 N., R. 112 W.**

   Rationale: Interest in development at these interchanges has been expressed. Traffic on Interstate 80 has increased by 25% in the past five years. The lands are valuable for

commercial development and highway design. Distances between Wyoming towns favor development of some of these isolated interchanges.

3. **Establish an industrial zone which encompasses the existing and prospective coal mining areas and portions of the valley floor east of the mines which might be required for attendant facilities.**

   Limit buildings, related structures, powerlines and conveyors to a zone as close as practical to the eastern face of the mining area. Confine utility, railroad and access rights-of-way to established and prospective corridors along U.S. Highway 189 and routes to the mine. Allow only one route between U.S. 189 and each mine site. Grant access across national resource lands for mining predicated on reciprocation of continued public access across company lands along routes (or alternatives) identified in the transportation plan. Improve or create range and wildlife habitat values elsewhere to offset losses by mining.

   Rationale: The decision to allow the extraction of coal cannot be made without recognizing the need for the use of land and the effects of human activity far beyond the bounds of the mined area. Public comment centered around replacement elsewhere of range and habitat to offset losses in this area. There was no opposition to the designation of this zone so long as every effort was made to offset wildlife and range losses and to minimize visual impacts.

4. **Classify 40 acres near Kemmerer (Sec. 27, T. 21 N., R. 116 W.) and 40 acres near Evanston (Sec. 4, T. 14 N., R. 120 W.) for lease as community solid waste disposal sites upon a clear expression of need from local government.**

   Rationale: The site at Kemmerer may not be needed as the Union Pacific Railroad track realignment project is eliminating both existing sites. If the railroad provides replacement sites, the two sites may not be needed. Evanston is attempting to close out their existing site. There would be less environmental impact on these sites than on alternate sites if developed for solid waste disposal.

5. **Transfer to private ownership 6,000 acres of potential agricultural land which occur as isolated tracts of national resource lands throughout the unit. Each transfer would require a specific analysis to ensure against loss of public values.**

   Rationale: These areas were omitted from retention classification under the Classification and Multiple Use Act of 1964 because of their potential for agricultural crop production and their fragmented and isolated nature. The land pattern and access make management difficult. Public comment has favored transfer to private ownership with provision to retain lands with high public value.

6. **Confine future utility expansion to existing utility system corridors whenever practical emphasizing less visible alignments, minimizing width requirements, and maximizing multiple occupancy. Issue rights-of-way in other areas subject to environmental assessment and surface protection and rehabilitation stipulations.**

   Rationale: The concentration of utility rights-of-way would prevent many of the impacts associated with intrusions into largely undisturbed areas. Public comment strongly favored this approach.

Management Decisions

MINERALS

Resource Description

Not all mineral resources found or produced in the Pioneer Trails unit will be described in this section. Mineral production is shown in Table 3.

Other minerals in the planning unit which are not currently under production include bentonite, uranium, sulphide and oxide, and geothermal steam.

Oil and Gas: Oil and gas production occurs throughout the planning unit. Both the Green River Basin and the Overthrust Belt contain oil and gas deposits. Most federal oil and gas is under lease. BLM processes about four drilling plans and six notices of intent to conduct oil and gas exploration per month in the planning unit. Each notice results in an average of 30 miles of seismic line.

Exploration is expected to continue at a high level. The Overthrust Belt which extends through the unit from Utah northward into Montana is considered by national oil publications as one of the most promising exploration areas.

Coal: Captain John C. Fremont reported coal outcrops in the Kemmerer area in 1843. Coal has been produced here since the late 1800's, primarily by underground mining. The recent energy crisis has resulted in increased activity. All current operations are strip or open pit mining.

The USGS has classified the entire area as valuable for coal. Reserves of 3 billion tons of bituminous coal and 5 billion tons of subbituminous coal are estimated. The bituminous coal is the highest rank of Wyoming coal at 11,000-12,000 Btu's per pound. The coal seams crop out in long narrow belts along thrust faults and folds.

Not all of the resources can be economically mined due to thin beds, cost of transportation, and mining difficulties in many areas. Bituminous coal, for the most part, can only be removed by deep mining methods. On the other hand, most subbituminous coal can be removed by strip mining methods.

Much of the economic reserves occur in the checkerboard land pattern with Union Pacific Railroad and subsidiaries controlling most of the mineral rights on the odd numbered sections.

Sodium (trona): Production of sodium began in the area as early as 1902. Increased operating costs caused the brine evaporation plant to close in 1908. Oil exploration in the 1930's discovered the main bed of trona and underground mining (Westvaco/FMC) began in 1947. Stauffer (1962), Allied (1968) and Texasgulf (1977) have opened mines and built processing plants.

Most of the known sodium leasing area is on the checkerboard land pattern.

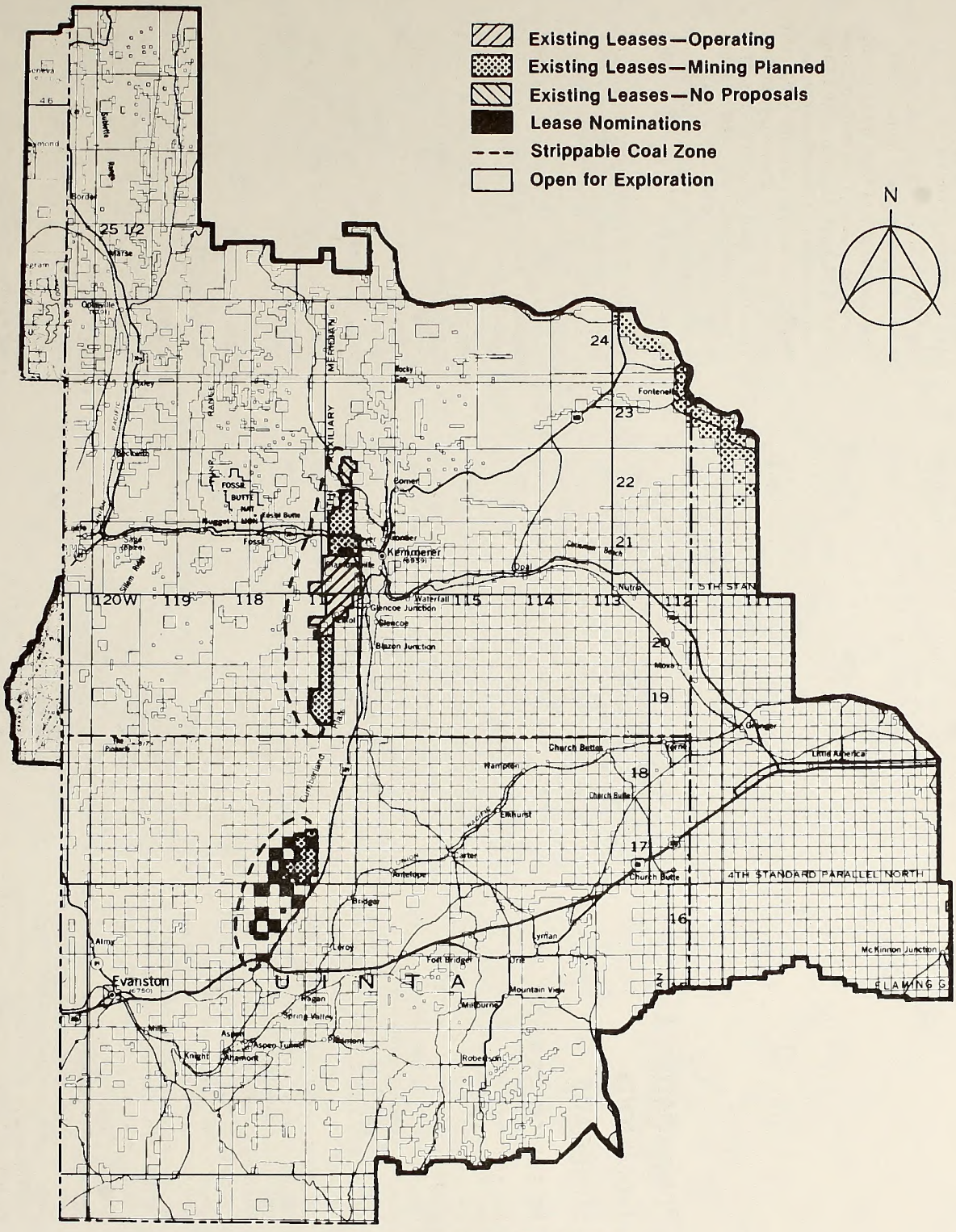
Soda ash produced from trona is used to produce glass. Trona is mined from the Wilkins Peak member of the Green River Formation. The entire unit has been classified valuable for sodium by USGS. Reserves in the known trona beds are at least 50 billion tons. The known trona beds extend beyond the boundaries of the planning unit. Production of trona is by underground mining at depths of from 500 to 1,500 feet.

Oil shale: The oil shale of the Green River Formation is the largest hydrocarbon deposit known. Estimates put the total oil in Wyoming, Colorado and Utah at 2,000 billion recoverable barrels. Deposits in this unit are of lower grade and deeper than those of the Piceance Creek Basin in Colorado. The estimated 400 billion barrels reserve in this part of the basin is not economically extractable with present technology. Therefore the basin is classified valuable for oil shale by USGS.

Phosphate: Much of the phosphate in the unit is of low grade. There is one active mine and mill at Leefe (Stauffer Chemical) with about a 10-year reserve.

Table 3
Mineral Production Statistics

Mineral	Production
Oil (1975)	50,694 Barrels
Gas (1975)	8,020,354 1000's of cu. ft.
Sodium (FY 1976)	7.7 Million Tons
Coal (FY 1976)	500,000 Tons
Phosphate (1976)	125,000 Tons
Clay (1976)	60,000 Tons
Shale Rock (1976)	40 Tons
Sand and Gravel (1976)	1,200 Yards
Rock (1976)	1,500 Yards



PIONEER TRAILS MFP
COAL

Related Major Issues/Problems

Oil and Gas Leasing and Development: The entire planning area is potentially valuable for oil and gas, though largely unexplored. Demand far outstrips production and increased exploration and development may be expected through the 15-year planning period.

Leasing of all the area for oil and gas could benefit the local and regional economy and increase supplies of domestic oil and gas.

Continued leasing and development may adversely impact the environment, community services, critical watershed areas, water quality, visual resources, critical wildlife habitats, sage grouse breeding complexes, raptor nesting sites and prairie dog towns which may be habitat for the endangered black footed ferret.

Coal Leasing and Development: The Kemmerer Coal Company's Elkol and Sorenson Strip mines west of Kemmerer produced 3.3 million tons in 1974. FMC Corporation is developing a mine 10 miles southwest of Kemmerer which is expected to produce 600,000 tons in 1976 and 1-2 million tons per year by 1980. Kemmerer Coal Company is proposing to open their North Block north of Kemmerer between 1980 and 1982. Estimated 1982 production would be 1.4 million tons. Rocky Mountain Energy (RME) plans to open the Twin Creek mine west of Kemmerer in 1977 with an annual production of 3 million tons by 1980. RME also plans to open their South Haystack mine in Uinta County about 15 miles northeast of Evanston in 1979. Production could reach 3 million tons per year by 1980. Immediate coal issues involve the narrow belt of strippable coal between Kemmerer and Evanston.

Federal coal resources may be identified in four categories:

1. Presently leased with operating mines (4,800 acres).
2. Presently leased with proposed mines (5,800 acres).
3. Nominated for lease through EMARS (8,100 acres).
4. Remainder of strippable and economic coal reserve subject to future nomination (18,000 acres). The remainder of the coal resource would require underground mining and is not expected to be developed during the 15-year planning period.

Coal development would exert both positive and negative impacts on regional socio-economic systems, and would negatively impact wildlife, visual quality, domestic livestock grazing, water quality and air quality during operation.

Sodium (Trona) Leasing and Development: Trona mining is limited to an isolated area of the planning unit. Since it is mined by underground methods, the effects on land are far more site-specific than in the case of strip mining. Issues that may develop involve the cumulative air degradation as a result of increased production and problems associated with large settling ponds and their highly toxic contents.

Decisions

Multiple Use Objective

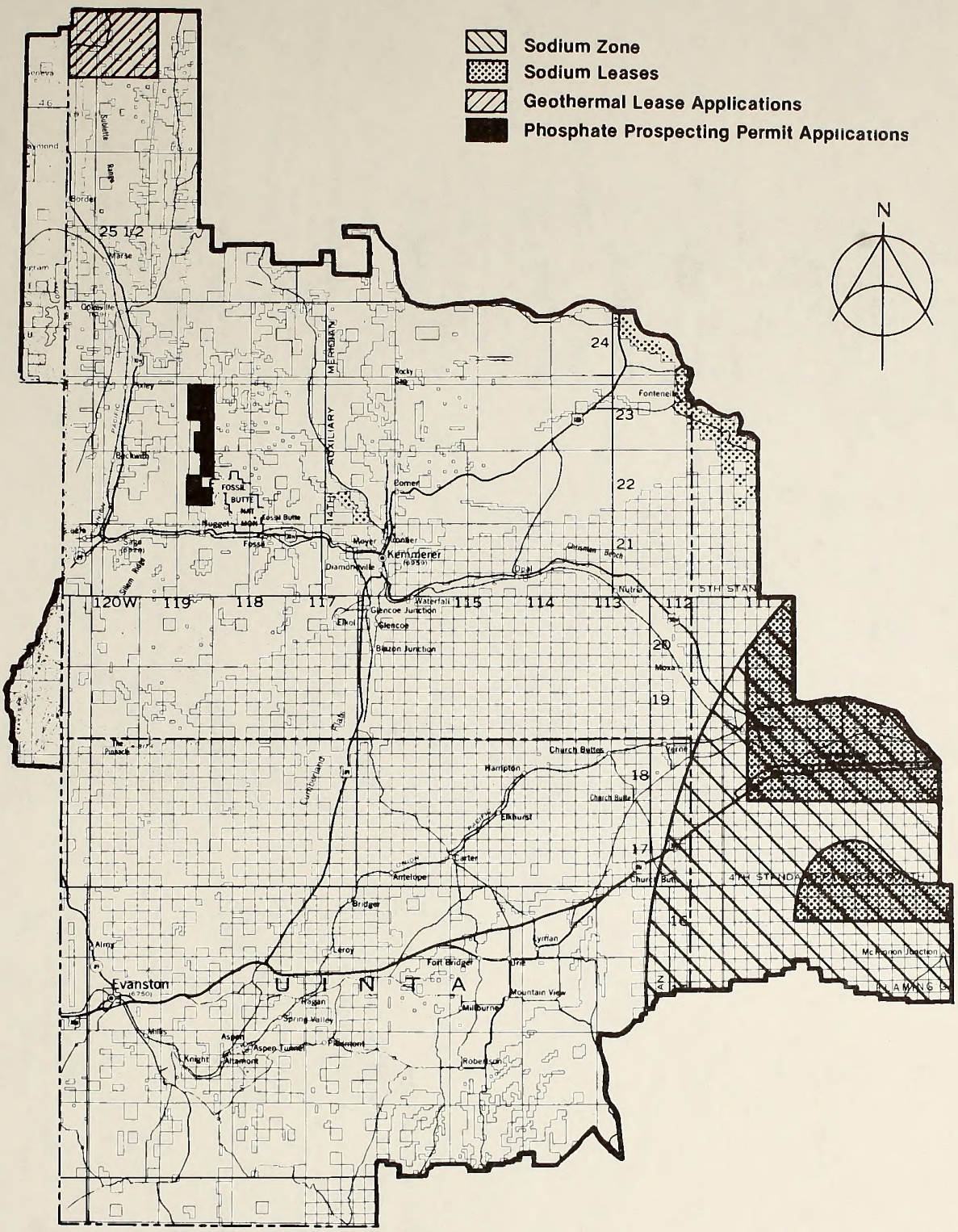
Promote federal energy mineral and other mineral development in an orderly and timely manner to assist the nation in achieving energy self-sufficiency by 1985, while providing adequate environmental safeguards and strict rehabilitation standards.

Multiple Use Decisions

Oil and Gas: Allow oil and gas exploration and development unit-wide subject to appropriate surface protection and rehabilitation stipulations.

Rationale: Surface values can be protected through appropriate stipulations and reclamation. Surface values considered during leasing and development include: historic trails and sites, recreation sites, known archeological and paleontological sites, streams and water quality, critical wildlife habitat, timber areas and visual resources.

The entire planning unit is considered an economic oil and gas resource. The development of this resource contributes to energy independence.



PIONEER TRAILS MFP
OTHER MINERALS

Mine/Company	Acres	Estimated Reserves Millions of Tons
North Block/Kemmerer Coal	2,950	50
Twin Creek/RME	2,320	40
South Haystack/RME	6,000	60

Coal:

1. **Approval of Filed Mining and Reclamation Plans on Existing Leases. Approve mine and reclamation plans with constraints relative to utility corridors, historic sites and trails, archeological and paleontological sites, and agricultural and visual resources of the Hams Fork Valley. This decision applies to the site specific proposed mines shown in the table.**

2. **Existing Leases With no Mining Plans Filed. Approve mine and reclamation plans when submitted subject to constraints previously listed as well as environmental, visual, and social-economic standards used in evaluating leases with filed mine and reclamation plans.**

3. **Areas Nominated Suitable for Lease. Offer the nominated areas for lease subject to an environmental assessment and constraints listed above.**

4. **Future Nominations for Lease. Offer future nominated areas for lease within the presently defined strippable coal reserve and subject to an environmental assessment and constraints listed above.**

   Rationale: Conversion from oil and gas energy uses to other forms of energy wherever possible is necessitated by the diminishing supply of oil and gas. Use of the nation's vast coal resource would provide time to develop more exotic forms of energy and to stabilize the country's economy. Coal consumption in the United States is projected to double by 1990. Coal in the planning unit will be in high demand because of its low sulphur, low ash, high Btu rating, easy accessibility, and proximity to adequate transportation systems. Public support for mining was voiced at MFP meetings with the constraints previously listed.

5. **Keep the planning unit open to coal exploration. No new areas are to be leased until the MFP is updated and environmental assessment completed.**

   Rationale: Interest in the deeper coal reserves is unlikely prior to 1990. Public comment supports the approach of total commitment of strippable coals in the planning unit before allowing development of the underground mining reserves. More data on these reserves are needed before future development can be assessed.

Sodium (Trona): Provide for exploration and orderly development of the sodium resource. Process lease and exploration applications and attendant rights-of-way on a "pipeline" basis.

Rationale: Three of the four major producers of sodium in Wyoming are in this planning unit. Annual production is approximately 7 million tons and is increasing. Although leased reserves and refining capacity are probably adequate through 1990, new deposits must be ready to be brought on line as older deposits are exhausted.

The impacts of exploration and the expansion of mining during the planning period appear to be minimal.

Geothermal: Issue geothermal leases with limitations to protect other resource values.

Rationale: The potential for geothermal development in the unit can only be identified through exploration. Leasing is prerequisite to that exploration. The geothermal resource orders furnish continuing opportunity to provide environmental protection prior to exploration and development.

Phosphate: Evaluate phosphate areas to determine if competitive lease sales and prospecting permits should be allowed.

Rationale: With present technology, the size of the competitive lease areas is uneconomic even by surface mining methods. An environmental assessment of prospecting permits must consider the possibility of eventual mining since the finding of a mineable resource during exploration qualifies the permittee for preference right leases.

Sand and Gravel: Identify areas suitable for sand and gravel sales adjacent to expanding communities.

Rationale: The growth of communities and support facilities (buildings, roads, etc.) will increase the demand for this product within the next 15 years. Quality determination will require inventory and exploration. Excavation will create surface disturbance areas. As specific sites are identified, impacts can be mitigated or the site can be rejected.

Management Decisions

FOREST PRODUCTS

Resource Description

The forestry program manages the forest resources on the public lands. Specific activities include forest development and rehabilitation; timber management; sale of forest products such as timber, posts, poles, and other vegetative products from forest lands; timber trespass abatement; and forest pest and disease control.

Acres of forested land in the planning unit are shown in Table 4. Table 5 shows the quantities of forest products sold.

Table 4
Acres of Forested Land

Type	Acreage
Douglas Fir	1,993
Subalpine Fir	2,102
Lodgepole Pine	10,080
Unclassified	5,777
Pinyon Juniper	30,763
Broadleaf Trees	53,518
TOTAL	104,233

Table 5
Forest Products Sold FY 76

Product	Unit	Quantity
Timber	1000's of Board Feet	546
Fuelwood	Cords	83
Post & Poles	Number of Permits	4
Christmas Trees	Number of Trees	1,890

Lodgepole pine stands occur mainly in the Upper Pine Creek area and in the Meek's Cabin area. The stands in the Upper Pine Creek area are generally in a thrifty condition, but some isolated overmature stands show signs of deterioration with small outbreaks of mountain pine beetle. The stands in the Meek's Cabin area are a mixture of size classes ranging from young thrifty timber to overmature, dying and dead material.

Douglas fir stands occur mainly between Dempsey Ridge and Rock Creek, and in the Sublette Range north of Cokeville. Generally, these stands are in fair condition, but some show evidence of considerable deterioration on the poorer sites. These stands are mature to overmature with very few well-developed young growth stands.

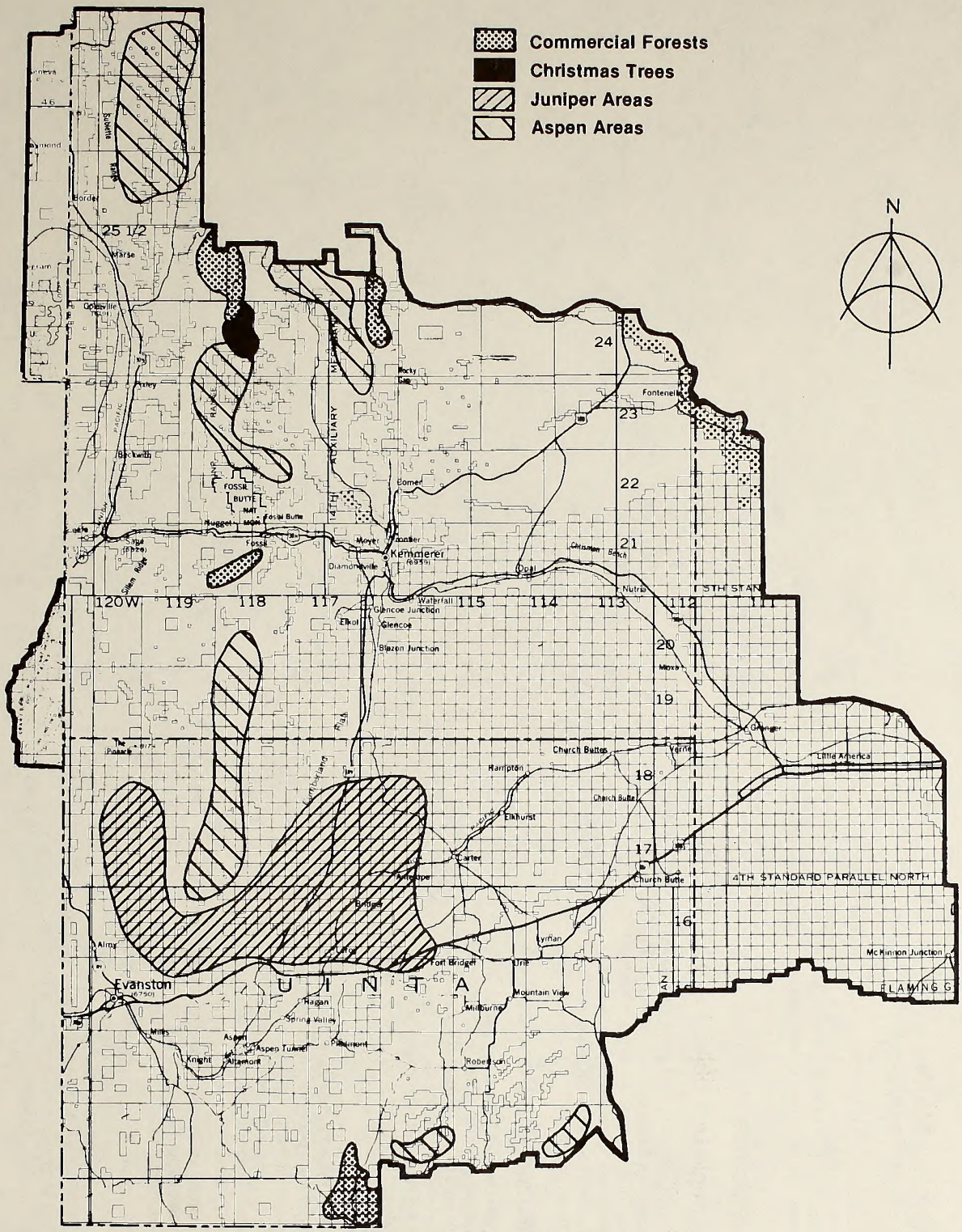
Subalpine fir can be found throughout the planning unit, and is the climax species in most of the lodgepole pine forest types. Subalpine fir stands are located throughout the resource area, except in the Meek's Cabin area. Large acreages are found on the eastern slopes of the Sublette Range and Dempsey Ridge. This species shows considerable deterioration in the older age classes and is generally overmature, of poor quality and with considerable rot. It is reproducing under overstories of lodgepole pine, Douglas fir, and aspen.

Aspen occurs throughout the planning unit. Many of these stands are deteriorating with no aspen reproduction in the understory. At present, aspen has little commercial value and is only occasionally taken with other timber. It rarely reaches sawlog size, and when it does, it usually has considerable rot. There is no demand for chips and pulp from aspen in this area.

Juniper stands cover approximately 30,000 acres of the planning unit. Much of this acreage is NRL. Very little information is available as to the conditions of the stands, but most of these stands would be classed as non-productive except as posts and poles.

Lodgepole pine is significantly overstocked and needs thinning. In this overstocked condition, serious mountain pine beetle infestation could occur.

Dwarf mistletoe is the most serious disease affecting lodgepole pine. Dwarf mistletoe reduces growth, increases mortality, and drastically reduces seed production. It has been found throughout the planning unit in lodgepole. The heaviest infestation is in the Meek's Cabin area.



PIONEER TRAILS MFP
FOREST PRODUCTS

Related Major Issues/Problems

Most of the productive forest stands are overstocked and as a result are not producing at their potential. Much overmature timber could be harvested.

Decisions

Multiple Use Objective

Provide a sustained yield of forest products to meet local demand and to improve the stands while considering other resource values such as aesthetics, water quality, wildlife and the environment.

Multiple Use Decisions

Commercial Forests: Intensively manage 12,000 acres of productive forest stands with cutting practices dictated by silvicultural requirements of the particular stand and other resource values. Limit clearcuts to a maximum of 20 acres with a maximum width of 130 yards.

Rationale: Timber is a locally important industry. Demand for sawtimber exceeds the volume being offered for sale. Forest management can benefit other land uses when properly harvested.

Christmas Trees: Maximize Christmas tree production on 1,800 acres of subalpine fir.

Rationale: At present there is a large demand for commercial and individual Christmas tree sales. Management practices could produce saleable trees in a shorter timeframe. This program has public support.

Management Decisions

RANGE AND LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Resource Description

The range management program manages the range resource on public lands as used by domestic livestock and wild horses. Specific activities include authorizing and supervising grazing use, developing and maintaining supporting livestock management facilities, and protecting the range from weed infestations, pests and diseases.

Livestock grazing in Wyoming began more than 100 years ago. Large ranching enterprises were among the first uses of the public lands in Wyoming. Cattle numbers increased from 8,000 in 1870 to 1.5 million in 1885. Sheep appeared on Wyoming range lands in the mid-1800's and by 1894 outnumbered cattle by more than a million. In 1909 sheep numbers reached a peak of 6 million. These sheep operations were mostly nomadic and many spent all year on the public lands. The range deteriorated under this increased use. In the 1920's and 30's, ranchers and concerned conservationists demanded controls which resulted in the passage of the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934. Wyoming now ranks first in sheep production and fourth in cattle production in the Western States even though sheep numbers have dropped to 1.3 million. Cattle numbers as of July 1976 were 2.1 million. Economic conditions in the sheep industry as well as labor and predator problems are compelling many operators to shift from sheep to cattle.

Most of the planning unit is limited to spring, summer and fall use because vegetation is covered with snow. Most vegetation does not make significant growth until mid-May and, at elevations of 7,000 feet or more, does not start growth until the 1st of June. In the lower elevations growth may start by May 1st.

The majority of the forage production comes from the sagebrush type. The meadow and grass types, though less than 2% of the total acreage, contribute approximately 13% of the total forage production. No known threatened or endangered plant species occur in the unit.

Table 6 shows the acreage of the major vegetation types in the planning unit.

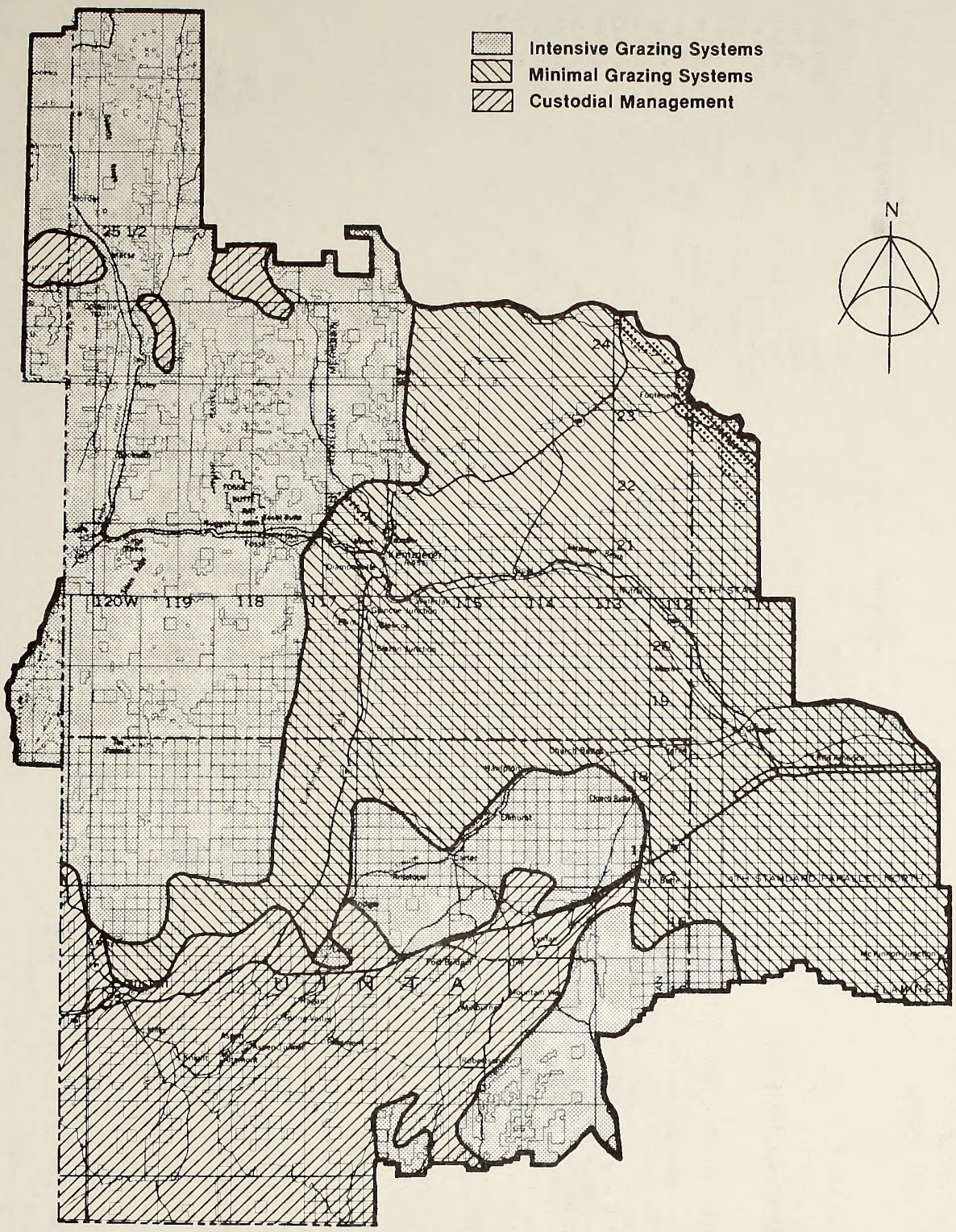
Table 7 shows range statistics for the planning unit during 1975.

Table 6
Acreage by Vegetative Types

Range Types	Acreage
Grass	20,430
Meadow	20,748
Perennial Forbs	42,871
Sagebrush	2,040,640
Mountain Shrub	34,320
Barren	6,291
Pinyon-Juniper	32,748
Broadleaf Trees	7,687
Saltbush	70,600
Greasewood	72,715
Winterfat	42,449
Desert Shrub	21,562
Croplands	134,124
Unclassified	420,016
Subtotal	2,967,201
Forest Types	65,783
Total	3,032,984

Table 7
1975 Range Statistics

		Section 3 In Grazing District	Section 15 Outside Grazing District	Total
A.	Number of Operators	171	33	204
B.	Number of Cattle & Horses (NRL)	24,598	3,627	28,225
C.	Number of Sheep (NRL)	120,220	11,150	131,370
D.	Total Authorized AUMs of Forage (NRL)	166,820	8,334	175,154
E.	Number of Crossing Permits	37	0	37
F.	Miles of Fence			440
G.	Number of Cattleguards/Passes			26
H.	Number of Water Developments			323
I.	Acres of Seeding			1,240
J.	Acres of Brush Control			45,100
K.	Total AUM Production of NRL Lands	170,955	8,334	179,289
L.	% Feed NRL Contributes to Total Livestock Feed Produced in Planning Unit			13.6



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RANGE AND LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Related Major Issues/Problems

Composition and density of the understory species have been reduced by livestock grazing. Past continuous grazing has been the major factor in part deterioration of the native range. Heavy use is occurring around water sources and in meadows. Very low allocations of forage have been made for wildlife and none for wild horses. Fences for livestock management restrict wild horse and wildlife movement. The checkerboard land ownership pattern contributes to management problems. Reduction of forage from mining, oil and gas production and related land uses such as pipelines, railroads, tramroads, haulroads and increased vehicular traffic are becoming significant in the planning unit.

Range conditions may be maintained or improved by implementing grazing systems which at a minimum provide for rotation of growing season use. Fencing and water developments might be required to facilitate the rotation of growing season use. Livestock operators desire the flexibility to change class of livestock in response to economic fluctuations in market price and production costs.

Improved range conditions will normally benefit livestock, wild horses, wildlife, watershed, and visual resources.

Management facilities such as fences may conflict with migration of wildlife and wild horses, restrict the recreationist, and disturb open space values.

Multiple Use Objective

To manage the livestock in a manner that will increase available forage for livestock and provide improvement in wildlife habitat, watershed conditions and other related resources. The Range and Livestock Management Map shows the areas referenced in the following text.

Multiple Use Decisions

Implement grazing management systems in area 1 to meet the physiological requirements of the forage resource, provide forage to meet the projected need for livestock, provide forage to meet the projected needs for wildlife, protect aquatic habitat, and protect visual resources. This will require numerous fences, water developments and combining of allotments in some cases.

Rationale: A grazing management system is needed to improve plant vigor, density and composition and to maximize livestock forage production to meet projected demand. Public comments generally favored intensive grazing management to meet multiple resource needs rather than significant reductions in livestock use. The public also request that fencing be held to the absolute minimum.

Implement grazing management systems in area 2 to maintain the present range condition, to provide forage for wildlife and to meet the projected livestock forage demands. These areas will require minimal fence and water developments and will require that allotments be combined in some cases.

Rationale: Less intensive management systems are required than in area 1. Otherwise, the rationale is the same as area 1.

Provide for custodial management in area 3 by authorizing use on an annual basis and carrying out supervision as needed to assure continued watershed protection. Use national resource lands (NRL) in these areas to exchange for private lands intermingled with solidly blocked national resource land in other allotments. Encourage the Soil Conservation Service to develop ranch plans on these areas in conjunction with private lands.

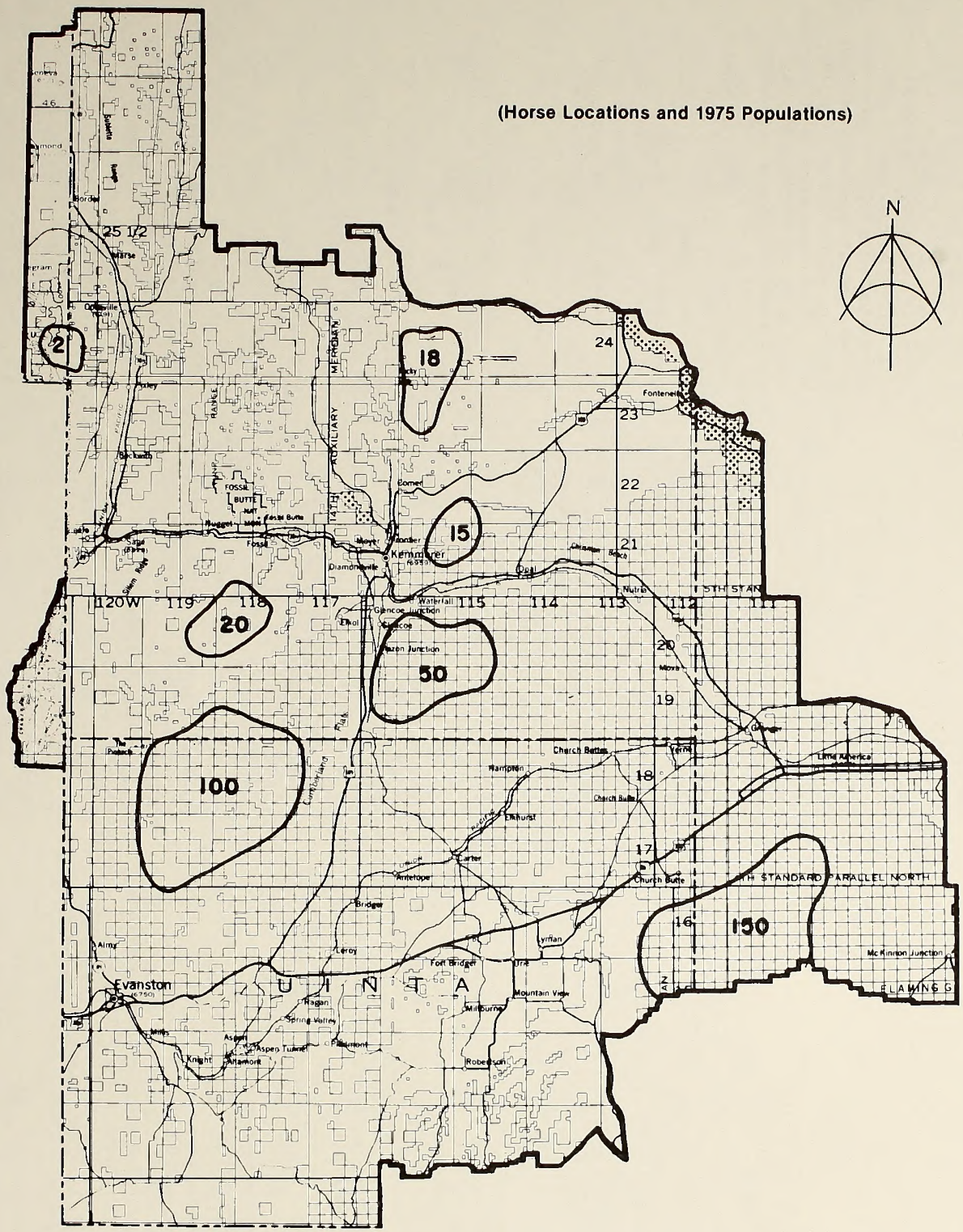
Rationale: It is proper and desirable to maintain range condition, watershed values and wildlife habitat on these areas; however, national resource lands are a minor part of the total. Since extensive private land is involved, a grazing system with SCS involvement is appropriate.

Decisions on sagebrush spraying for increased livestock forage will be made on a case by case basis after grazing system implementation. Normally no spraying will be allowed along streams, aspen and willow groves, and in sage grouse breeding and nesting areas, antelope and deer winter ranges and high quality visual areas.

Rationale: Sagebrush spraying may not be required after implementation of a grazing system. A case by case approach, if the need still exists, would minimize other resource conflicts.

Allow changes in class of livestock and season of use where a grazing system to protect multiple-use values can be implemented. Authorize conversions in accordance with a detailed plan and consistent with range suitability for the class of grazing animal only after an environmental assessment has been prepared and impacts minimized.

Rationale: No detailed plans or assessments have yet been made. Too many unknowns exist to allow conversions at this time.



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WILD AND FREE-ROAMING HORSES

Management Decisions

WILD, FREE-ROAMING HORSES

Program Description

Wild, free-roaming horses and burros are under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture for the purposes of management and protection.

The growth of the livestock industry in the West, the lessened use of horses by the military following World War I, the abandonment of farm horses due to mechanization, the extensive gathering of horses for commercial meat purposes, periods of extreme weather and forage conditions, and the recent passage of legislation to protect and manage wild free-roaming horses have all contributed in some way to changing horse populations.

An Adopt-a-Horse program has begun to assist in the management of wild horses. The Bureau conducts roundups of wild horses on over-populated ranges. The animals are then made available to qualified individuals for their personal use. Removing excess horses for adoption protects the environment and ensures that the remainder of the herd will have a more adequate food supply. Approximately 350 wild horses were recently counted in the planning unit. Of these, approximately 300 are in the checker-board area.

Related Major Issues/Problems

All identified horses running on the public lands have been either claimed by private individuals or they are found in intermingled public and private lands (checkerboard area). In accordance with Section 4 of Public Law 92-195, all wild free-roaming horses will be removed from private lands, upon request, or when a cooperative agreement with the land owner cannot be established. Requests for removal have been received and a plan for removal developed and approved to carry out this request.

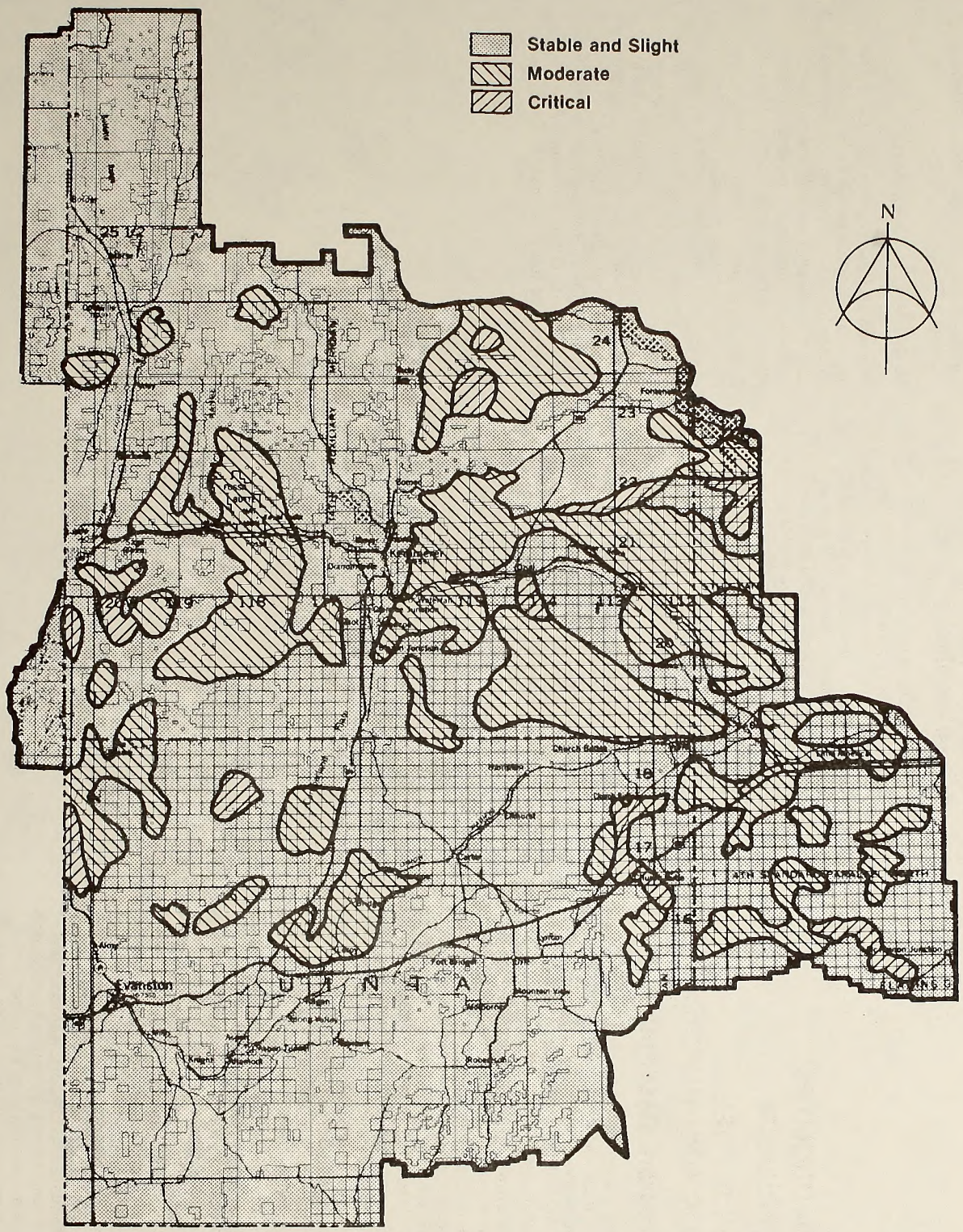
Multiple Use Objectives

To comply with the requirements of Public Law 92-195 in relation to claiming of private horses and removal of wild horses from private lands. Manage wild horses as a component of multiple use management when possible.

Multiple Use Decisions

Remove all free roaming horses on the national resource lands as they are either claimed or running in a checker-board ownership area. Management herds are proposed to be maintained elsewhere in the Rock Springs District.

Rationale: Removal of the animals from the checkerboard areas is deemed mandatory under the law, PL 92-195. Total removal of the animals from those areas incapable of maintaining viable breeding herds is determined to be in the interest of the animals to prevent the complications of continuous inbreeding that would occur in small herds. Some public comment was opposed to the proposal.



PIONEER TRAILS MFP
WATERSHED CONDITION

Management Decisions

WATERSHED

Resource Description

Management of watersheds is essentially the management of land for the conservation and production of renewable natural resources. It is concerned with relationships between soil, vegetation and the quality, quantity and timing of water production from watersheds as they affect both on-site and downstream use. Management involves prescribing some kind of land use, non-use or modification of vegetation cover.

The Bureau's overall watershed management objective is to enhance water quality, improve streamflow timing and water yield, renew ground water recharge and control floods and sedimentation. The Bureau also provides for and maintains a uniform system for soils inventory and develops practical soils interpretations. The Bureau's soil scientists, hydrologists and watershed specialists interpret and utilize basic watershed management principles and provide technical support in understanding the use of soils and water resource data. These are the variables of the watershed system which are influenced by land use. They enhance both on and off site resource values and assist in the planning and development of multiple resource management decisions for all Bureau programs.

Many land management practices designed to affect watersheds can be placed in two general categories: (1) the protection and rehabilitation of soil and plant resources; and (2) the management of watershed resources to modify the quantity, quality, and timing of water production. Erosion condition of lands inventories are shown in Table 8.

Table 8
Present Erosion Condition Classes

Erosion Condition	Acres	Percent
Stable	58,855	6.2
Slight	494,594	51.4
Moderate	357,354	37.1
Critical	51,085	5.3
Severe		
TOTAL	961,888	100.0

The majority of lands inventories showed a static trend and much of the erosion now occurring is considered to be natural geologic erosion.

On the whole, water quality in the planning unit is generally good and is expected to remain so. However, some specific water quality problems do exist or are likely to result from future developments.

Related Major Issues/Problems

Activities such as mineral exploration and development; grazing; road, trail, pipeline and utility line construction, and off-road vehicle use can contribute to watershed problems if not conducted properly.

Water quality problems are mainly from nonpoint sources. Known quality problem areas are Blacks Fork (salinity in the Church Butte reach), Little Muddy Creek (sediment), lower Brear River (sediment), and Blacks Fork, Smiths Fork and Hams Fork (nutrients).

Decisions

Multiple Use Objective

To manage the watershed resources for maintenance of soil productivity, enhancement of water quantity and quality and mitigation of impacts to watershed values in authorizing and managing other resource activities.

Multiple Use Decisions

Complete inventories for soils and hydrology and establish a water quality monitoring program on NRL to supplement other monitoring programs in the unit.

Rationale: Additional specific data is needed to adequately manage the soil and water resources and to define specific sources and causes of water pollution.

Regulate surface disturbing activities such as mineral, gas and oil exploration, grazing and off-road vehicle travel on areas of high present erosion, fragile soil and poor vegetation cover with specific site studies to determine control areas.

Rationale: Surface disturbance in these areas adds to erosion and sedimentation. Further study is required to delineate problem areas and control measures.

Consider land treatment and type conversions for watershed enhancement after management plan development and adequate site specific review, environmental assessments and benefit cost analyses.

Rationale: Specific treatment areas can only be considered on a site specific case by case basis. Only treatments which have passed environmental, economic and other resource value tests should be completed.

Management Decisions

RECREATION

Resource Description

The recreation program covers many activities and values. In addition to visitor and cultural resource management, other major activities include management of recreational vehicle use, river management, and protection of natural and wilderness values.

NRL in Wyoming have the potential for a wide range of recreational uses. These include hunting, fishing, camping, picnicking, rock-hounding, sightseeing, river floating, and many other outdoor activities.

BLM's recreation program provides facilities and information. It also seeks to assure the continued availability of resources for recreational use and increased visitor safety through eliminating or neutralizing hazards.

Recreational activities in the planning unit are outlined in Table 9.

Table 9
Recreational Activities — 1975*

Activity	Unit	Units (Approx.)
Hunting—Big Game	Hunter Days	17,500
Hunting—Upland Game	Hunter Days	4,500
Hunting—Water Fowl	Hunter Days	1,000
Fishing	Fishermen Days	81,900
Winter Sports	Visitor Days	4,000
Water Sports	Visitor Days	6,700
Collecting	Visitor Days	5,000
Sightseeing (Specific)	Visitor Days	1,250
Off-Road Vehicles	Visitor Days	11,100
Camping	Visitor Days	3,000
Picnicking	Visitor Days	2,000

*Includes Private and State Lands.

Recreational values of the planning unit are closely tied to the open space values and the relatively natural condition. The Raymond mountain area located along the Idaho border of Cokeville is a potential natural area. It is extremely remote, and essentially void of intrusions and access. Natural geologic formations and a varied vegetative cover gives it outstanding scenic qualities. Wildlife values are very high including the presence of native Bear River Cutthroat Trout.

The planning unit is crossed by the Overland, California, Mormon, Pony Express and Oregon Trails, including several "cutoffs" to the latter. Many historic and archaeological sites are located in the planning unit, including Emigrant Springs, the Bridger Antelope Trap and the Piedmont Charcoal Kilns, all of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Sites. Other sites may qualify for nomination to that listing.

Related Major Issues/Problems

Natural Area: A "natural" or "special management" area designation in the Raymond Mountain Area could mean restriction of uses such as surface mining, oil and gas activities, road construction, timber cutting, off-road vehicle use and other such human related activities.

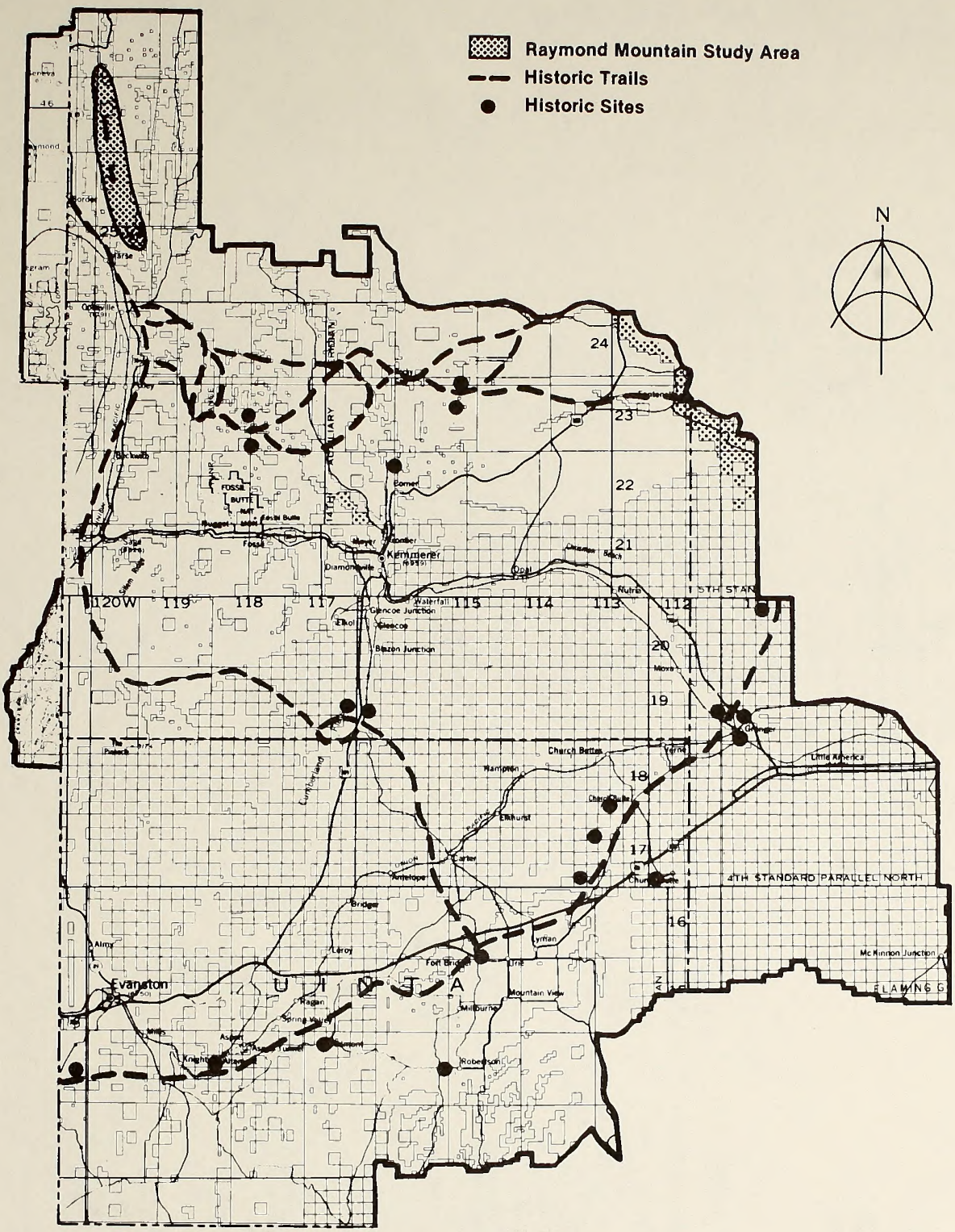
Historic, Archaeological, and Paleontological Values: Protection of historic sites and trails, archaeological sites, and paleontological sites will restrict other resource activities.

Off-Road Vehicles (ORV): ORV use on the national resource lands is widespread and unrestricted. Certain limitations of ORV use are being considered in order to minimize disturbance to critical wildlife habitat, to prevent watershed damage and to protect the cultural, natural and open space values.

The regulation of off-road travel to protect wintering wildlife could take the form of total closure during that period or the limiting of travel to designated routes.

Watershed protection measures would eliminate existing routes or segments that are eroding, eliminate vehicular travel off of designated routes, close trail areas to travel during wet seasons.

The protection of other values could include total closure to protect natural, historic or archaeological sites, partial closing to eliminate unsightly scars, or limiting travel to designated routes in order to preserve open space.



PIONEER TRAILS MFP
RECREATION

Decisions

Multiple Use Objectives

Natural Areas: To manage areas with unique natural features in a manner which minimizes surface disturbance and preserves the values present until final management decisions can be made.

Historic, Archaeological and Paleontological Value: To provide protection and interpretation for historic, archaeological, and paleontological resources of significance while permitting other resource use and development.

ORV: Keep NRL lands open for ORV use to the maximum extent possible while minimizing disturbance to critical wildlife habitat and associated animals, watershed values, historic, archaeological and paleontological resources, and natural and open space values.

Multiple Use Decisions

Natural Area: Study the Raymond Mountain Area for possible future designation and withdrawal as a natural area.

Rationale: The Raymond Mountain Area has outstanding scenic and geologic features. The area is essentially roadless with high game populations. No strong public support for a designation more limiting than "natural area" has surfaced.

Historic, Archaeological, and Paleontological Values: Protect significant historic trails and sites and undiscovered archaeological and paleontological resources from disturbing activities. Develop an informational and interpretive program to maximize public enjoyment of significant resources.

Rationale: Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-665), section 2(b) of Executive Order 11593, and section 101(b)(4) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (P.L. 91-190) require protection of significant historic, cultural and paleontological resource values.

ORV: Designate the planning unit open to ORV use subject to further study to determine the need for regulation or closures based on important resource values and uses.

Rationale: Adequate data and justification are not available to regulate or close areas to ORV use. The Raymond Mountain Area is to be studied for possible future designation and closure to ORV.

Management Decisions

WILDLIFE

Resource Description

BLM administered lands and waters provide important habitat to a wide variety of terrestrial and aquatic wildlife. Wyoming ranks first in antelope and sage grouse. Other big game include mule deer, white-tail deer, elk, moose, and bighorn sheep.

Threatened and endangered wildlife species that are probably inhabitants of public lands are the peregrine falcon and black-footed ferret. Wyoming is noted for its excellent trout fishing. Colorado River and Bear River cutthroat trout habitat are two of our most significant fisheries habitats. This significance is based on the rarity and the natural interest in maintaining habitat for threatened or endangered wildlife.

Table 10
Terrestrial Habitat Data

Species	Habitat Acres (approx.)	Habitat Status Quality	Habitat Status Quantity	Population Status
Elk				
Summer	184,320	Good	Stable	Increasing
Winter	374,400	Good	Stable	
Mule Deer				
Summer	1,382,400	Good	Decreasing	Stable
Winter	765,440	Fair	Decreasing	
Pronghorn				
Summer	2,180,400	Good	Stable	Increasing
Winter	551,680	Good	Stable	
Moose				
Summer	645,120	Good	Stable	Slightly
Winter	666,240	Good	Decreasing	Increasing
Black Bear	405,760	Fair	Stable	Increasing
Sage Grouse	2,920,344	Good	Decreasing	Unknown
Breeding & Known Strutting	280,482			
Known Winter	109,440			
Ruffed Grouse	216,320	Good	Stable	Stable
Blue Grouse	143,360	Good	Stable	Stable
Chuckar	72,960	Poor	Stable	Unknown
Hungarian	76,960	Good	Stable	Unknown
Ducks	428,800	Unknown	Stable	Unknown
Geese	106,880	Unknown	Stable	Unknown

Upland game birds and waterfowl are also significant users of Wyoming national resource lands. Habitat improvements are attainable through reservoir construction, reservoir fencing, nest construction and grazing management systems.

Wildlife and fisheries management on the NRL is a joint effort of BLM and Wyoming Game and Fish Department. BLM manages the habitat and Wyoming Game and Fish Department is responsible for the wildlife and fish management.

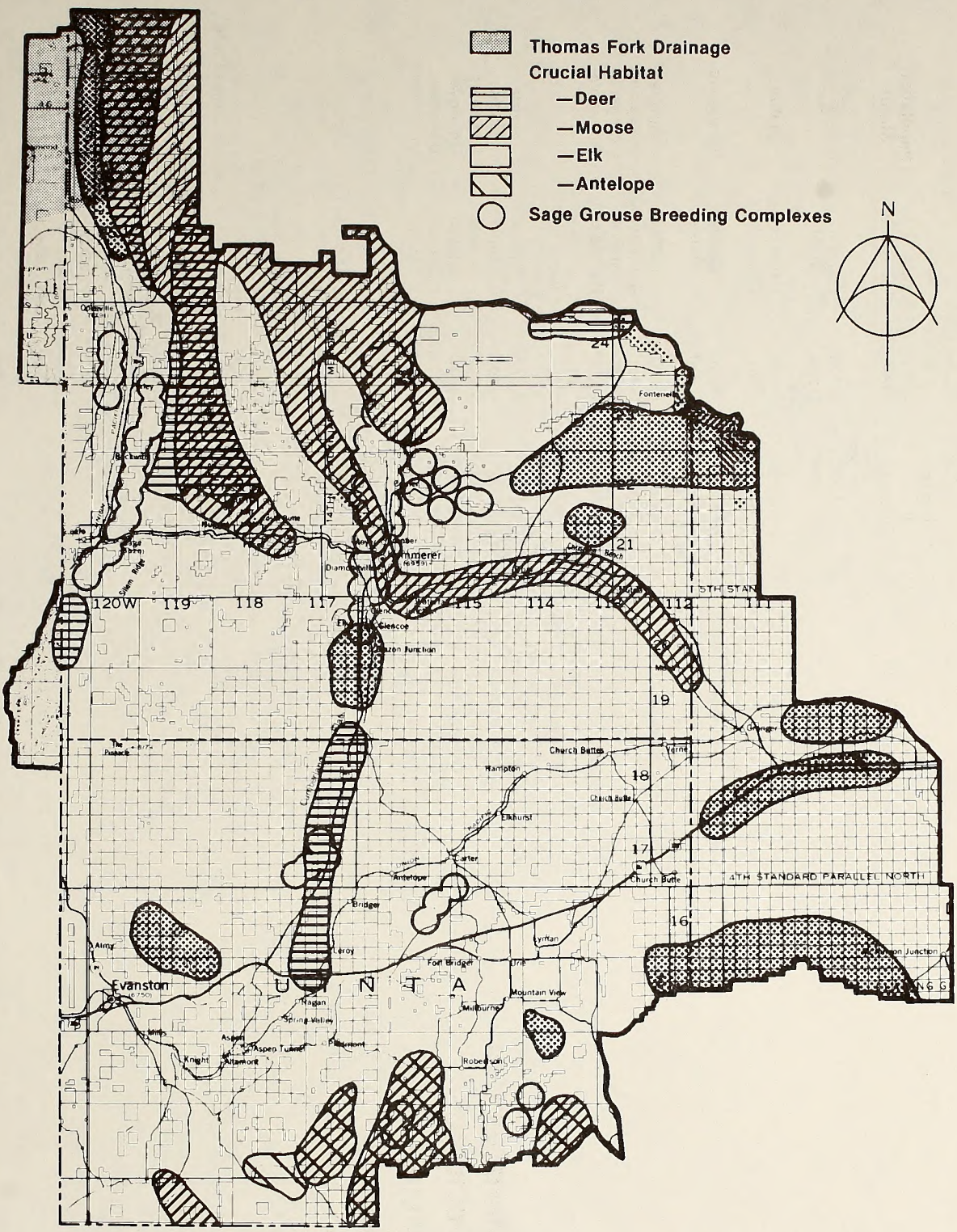
Table 10 provides a summary of conspicuous wildlife species, population trends, acres of habitat and habitat status.

No information has been documented in the planning unit regarding endangered or threatened species and their associated habitats. In order to maintain or protect habitat utilized by threatened or endangered species we must know the locations, season of use, and forage or prey species which influence the animals.

Data on habitat for non-game species and raptors is lacking. However, inventory work is now increasing in these areas.

A recent stream inventory resulted in the aquatic habitat data shown in Table 11.

The Thomas Fork drainage contains genetically pure remnants of the original Bear River cutthroat variety.



PIONEER TRAILS MFP
WILDLIFE

Related Major Issues/Problems

Management of wildlife habitat is of prime importance to the associated wildlife species and to the total ecological interrelationship of a balanced environment. Management of crucial habitat is a major issue. BLM is to provide adequate food and cover on important identified areas during critical periods of the year, such as winter and early spring ranges for big game and during the reproductive period for sage grouse kidding, fawning, or calving grounds. Other related problems are inadequate forage allocations and water development, restriction of movement due to fences, competition for forage with livestock and wild horses, and disturbance caused by human activity (mining, recreation, ORV's). Vegetative and soil disturbing activities have a very drastic effect on food, cover and water quality. These activities are increasing and the direct result is decreasing wildlife habitat. It may be that some uses will have to be restricted, limited or excluded within crucial habitat areas. Impacts could occur to recreation (snowmobiling, off-highway travel), livestock grazing (reduction), and mineral exploration (seasonal access limitations, vegetative disturbance limits).

Decisions

Multiple Use Objective

Maintain and/or improve the quality of existing terrestrial and aquatic wildlife habitat with special emphasis for crucial habitats (i.e., winter ranges, nesting and strutting areas, calving grounds, spawning areas, etc.) to support present populations.

Multiple Use Decisions

Habitat Protection: Provide adequate stipulations on land use authorizations to protect and maintain crucial wildlife habitats where feasible and to rehabilitate surface disturbances with adapted vegetation species. Implement ORV closures as the need arises in conjunction with Wyoming Game and Fish Department recommendations. Limit fencing which restricts normal wildlife movement during any season of the year.

Rationale: Impacts to crucial wildlife habitats cannot be eliminated although they can be largely mitigated over the long term. Presently, most of the unit is leased for oil and gas development and exploration is increasing due to the recent indications in the overthrust belt. Additionally, coal, phosphate and sodium leases cover many areas.

Indiscriminate human activity, particularly snowmobiling can have an extremely damaging effect on wildlife. This action can cause extreme stress on the animals during a period when they are least able to withstand the effects.

Closures will be made when the Wyoming Game and Fish Department has documented a problem and has made specific request for closure. These will be limited to the minimum area and time period required and subjected to public analysis. Improperly located and poorly designed livestock control fences can greatly impact

Table 11
Aquatic Habitat Data

Drainage	Smiths Fork	Thomas Fork	Bear River	Blacks Fork	Hams Fork
Number of Streams in Drainage on NRL	28	12	43	24	33
Total Miles of Streams	109	60	467	317	114
NRL Stream Miles	46	38	188	97	56
NRL Stream Miles Inventoried	27	33	33	12	40
Spawning Habitat					
% Good	5	12	12		20
% Fair	28	22	60	1	21
% Poor	25	47	19	9	22
% Virtually None	17	19	9	63	18
% None	25			27	19
Resident Habitat					
% Good	24	7		16	1
% Fair	31	87	88	70	81
% Poor	39	3	12	13	13
% Virtually None	6	3		1	5
Channel Stability					
% Stable	29	14	60	33	36
% Declining	71	86	40	77	64

wildlife movements. Design standards exist which can largely mitigate this interference. Careful on-the-ground, multi-discipline study can avoid the problems associated with poor fence location.

Habitat Expansion and Improvement: Install water developments for antelope and sage grouse in the Carter and Granger lease areas subject to Habitat Management Plan and environmental assessment.

Rationale: Water development could expand the habitat area for antelope and sage grouse. Early implementation is required to offset eventual habitat losses of similar values in the projected coal mining area. Public comment strongly supports this effort.

Implement habitat improvement projects for elk, mule deer, moose, forest grouse, fish and beaver. Improvements may include: mountain mahogany pruning or chaining; juniper chaining; aspen regeneration; sagebrush to grass type conversion; willow planting. All improvements will be subject to development of habitat management plans, implementation of a grazing system, environmental assessment, cost/benefit analysis, and Wyoming Game and Fish review.

Rationale: Vegetation type conversions and reseeding may be needed if deteriorated habitat conditions do not respond to changes in management. Also, improved habitats could offset losses expected to occur because of coal mining activity.

Inventories, Studies and Plans: Complete necessary inventories, studies, and plans for adequate wildlife habitat management.

Rationale: Information on threatened and endangered wildlife, non-game species, raptors and critical wildlife habitat is essentially lacking. The unit is an important wildlife area and is abundant in needed energy and mineral resources.

CUMULATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW

Lands

Specific major land use decisions will provide national resource lands for orderly controlled development and growth, while allowing for the consolidation of utility routes into designated corridors.

Social well being, income, employment, tax base and the general economy of the area would benefit from controlled land disposal and development. The overall environment, including the visual resource, would also benefit from this controlled development, which would confine facilities to zoned areas and corridors, thus protecting open space values from unwanted intrusions.

As a result of these actions, possible negative short and long term impacts could occur within or near these localized areas, in the form of impacts on water quality, visual resources, community services (health, education, police, roads, etc.), historic sites and trails, wildlife habitat and undiscovered cultural resources.

Minerals

Impacts generated as a result of mineral resource decisions have beneficial and adverse effects on social values and the environment. Those minerals having the greatest development potential are coal and petroleum products. Decisions to develop the coal through exploration and mining will provide a needed power source, primarily for electrical power generation.

The area designated for coal development is already impacted by existing mines, power plants, roads, etc.; therefore, increased production would in essence enlarge and magnify the existing situation. This will result in negative impacts to wildlife habitat, visual resources, livestock forage, water quality and air quality, during development, production and rehabilitation operations. Social values will be adversely effected in that development of the resource will cause a change in the present lifestyle by increasing the population through employment opportunity, thereby increasing the demand for already limited facilities and public services (schools, law enforcement, medical care, etc.). Benefits will also occur through increased income, employment, tax base and improvement in the general economy, which will contribute to the overall social well-being of the impacted area.

The decision to allow for continued oil and gas exploration and development could have a cumulative and wide ranging adverse effect on other non-renewable resources throughout most of the unit. Although impacts would be scattered and localized, additional protective measures would apply to each specific site, thereby mitigating the total overall effect.

Social values would be effected both negatively and beneficially, as described for coal development, except that the oil and gas development will no doubt be more widely spread and impact most communities to a lesser extent.

Forestry

Decisions pertaining to forestry are primarily related to stand improvement and development, which would have minor adverse impacts on the environment associated with surface disturbance, visual resources, wildlife and watershed. Benefits would be contributed to employment opportunity through timber sales, directly adding to the social well being of the area. Additional environmental benefits will occur from well managed forest lands, in the form of a more healthy and viable resource capable of providing for other related uses.

Livestock Forage

Livestock forage decisions are directed at maintaining and/or improving the vegetative resource. Improved range conditions and increased forage production can be expected to provide benefits to all activities dependent on a sustained yield of quality rangeland vegetation.

Management practices such as fences, water development and vegetative treatment will be designed and located so as to minimize the effect on wildlife, recreationists and open space values; while being used as an essential tool for increasing vigor and establishing new plant growth. Allowance for change in class of livestock will be dependent on benefit to the vegetative resource and other competing uses, whichever combination will result in the best ecological balance.

Maintaining a vigorous and healthy vegetative cover will establish a sound base for multiple use management of this resource.

Wild Horses

Our decision provides for removal of horses from the checkerboard area, which contains more than 50% privately controlled land. This and other control methods will result in the halting of adverse overuse impacts on the vegetation, thereby benefiting livestock, wildlife, watershed and overall environmental quality. In one respect, benefits will accrue to the maintenance of a ranch oriented style of life.

Watershed

Enhancement and protection of water quality, soils and vegetation resources is stressed as a means of improving watersheds and overall environmental conditions. Environmentally acceptable management practices and land treatments are proposed to improve watershed conditions, by correcting imbalances resulting from past uses. Benefits expected are decreased soil erosion, improved vegetative cover and better quality of water.

Adverse impacts are slight to non-existent, as far as the environment is concerned, although some social impact could be expected as a result of special requirements being applied to surface disturbing activities.

Recreation

Minimal impacts are expected as a result of recreation management decisions, in general they favor environmental protection and continuance of present life styles. Planned control in the authorization of surface disturbing activities and location of intrusions, will preserve historic values and maintain a quality visual resource. Natural areas will be preserved and recreation activities will not be allowed to significantly degrade the existing ecological interrelationships. Historic sites and trails are to be managed and preserved for their social values. Some restraints for protection of geologic values, scenic qualities and endangered fauna and flora, will no doubt cause conflicts with other uses and even within the recreation program; an example of this would be possible restrictions placed on off-road vehicle use.

Wildlife

Management actions are aimed at benefiting wildlife habitat and the associated wildlife species, which consistently favor maintaining a balanced ecological interrelationship of the environment. Decisions are directed at protecting and improving specific habitat areas such as winter and early spring big game ranges, sage grouse strutting grounds and reproductive areas, along with maintenance of kidding, fawning and calving grounds. Other management recommendations include a balanced allocation of the vegetation and water resource, minimum disturbance to wildlife habitat and movement, and proper management and control of all other competing uses. Restrictions placed on other activities will cause changes in the existing way of life and mode of operations, which are generally considered to provide more social and environmental benefits than adverse impacts.

INTERRELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER PLANS

During development of the Pioneer Trails MFP, a special effort was made to coordinate this plan with other federal, state and local government officials. This was to ensure that BLM planning efforts and management decisions did not conflict with land use plans of other agencies. Agencies or government officials contacted during the planning process, in addition to the public meeting, include: U.S. Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Sweetwater County Commissioners, Sweetwater County Planning Commission, Lincoln and Uinta County Planning Office, and Southwestern Wyoming Water Quality Planning Agency. BLM districts were contacted to ensure interdistrict BLM plan coordination.

Many of the decisions in the Pioneer Trails MFP will have significant on and off-site implications affecting other agencies. Major decisions relative to coal development could foreseeably affect every agency mentioned above. For some government organizations, coal development on a large scale will create significant workloads regarding the various impacts, especially for the State Department of Environmental Quality and U.S. Geological Survey. Decisions relative to making NRL available for urban expansion and public purposes should benefit local government concerned with future growth in several of the communities located within the Pioneer Trails unit.

Intensifying livestock grazing will impact agencies such as the Soil Conservation Service, State Land Board and Forest Service who work with the same range users within their areas of jurisdiction. Range management practices affect wildlife populations either beneficially or adversely. This will have a direct impact on the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Existing procedures call for cooperative planning on range management by all agencies involved.

Wildlife management decisions have been coordinated with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to ensure that BLM management of the habitat is coordinated with the department's objectives for each wildlife species.

MFP decision areas adjoining the national forests are of interest to the U.S. Forest Service. Of particular note is the decision to return public lands adjoining the Wasatch National Forest to oil and gas leasing activity and further to actively manage the forest resources on those lands.

The decision to develop snowmobile trails requires a joint effort with the Bridger-Teton National Forest and acquisition of permanent access could affect the USFS study of roadless areas.

The call for revocation of all USBR withdrawals that are not serving the purposes of the original withdrawal could have considerable effect on USBR plans since some of the lands are proposed for recreation management by that agency.

Much of the NRL surrounding Fossil Butte National Monument is visible from that reserve. Actions on the NRL which could impact visual quality would be of major concern to the National Park Service. BLM campgrounds which could serve National Monument visitors would be desirable from an NPS viewpoint.

Decisions that could possibly result in the delineation of roadless areas would be of major importance to the Wyoming Department of Public Lands. Conversely, the development of legal access and intensive forest management on NRL would often be of major importance to the management of state forest resources.

A major relationship exists with local land use planning efforts carried on by Lincoln, Uinta, Sweetwater, Rich (Utah) and Bear Lake (Idaho) counties. The three Wyoming counties are most affected by a variety of decisions which tend to forecast specific land uses. The greatest interest has been expressed in those decisions dealing with the mining of various minerals, road networks, utility corridors and industrial zones. To the extent that local planning has been completed, the MFP decisions generally complement local planning.

These are some examples of the coordination which has taken place to date on some of the issues.

Almost any decision made in this MFP process affects other government organizations and their land use plans.

ACTIONS AFTER THE MFP

This plan will be followed by on-the-ground actions based on the decisions listed. Some of these actions may require the development of detailed plans prior to implementation of the decisions.

These actions are subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. An environmental assessment is prepared for each action whether it is initiated by industry or BLM. If the impacts are unacceptable, the proposed action may be modified or rejected.

The implementation of on-the-ground actions initiated by BLM is contingent upon the necessary funding by the Congress. It may be some time before some of these decisions are implemented.

This plan will be continually updated. As new resource information becomes available, as technology improves, as needs and demands change, and as law, regulations and policy change, this plan will be revised.

Any major changes in this plan will be subject to public review and comment.

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